

March 2009



Santa Rosa County District 2 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner

District 2
Commissioner
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As we enjoy these cool nights and comfortable days, we know that summer time and hot weather is just around the corner. I encourage all Santa Rosa County citizens to take advantage of this time to prepare for summer. Extra insulation, energy audits and new filters are just a few ways to save. As your commissioner I have asked all county facilities to do the same. I have asked we set a goal of 10 percent electric reduction. Although with some buildings (such as the old courthouse) this may not be possible, in our other buildings it is easily achievable.

Another action that affects our area is the recent purchase of the Pullum Industrial Park. I asked Cindy Anderson from T.E.A.M Santa Rosa to explain it in more detail, which you will find on page 2 of this newsletter. My decision was based on the ability to grow our job market. My wife and I have had to watch as two of our children moved out of the county for work. I hope in the future others will not have to do the same. This purchase was accomplished with funding set aside for development -- not borrowed or used out of funds that would pay salaries but funds that will create salaries.

Finally I hope and pray that we will continue to work together, help each other and strive to regain our economy. I believe we must all work together on a local level not wait on state or federal help. If it comes great, but lets not wait for it.

Respectfully,
Bob Cole, District 2 Commissioner

Upcoming Community Events

Scratch Ankle Festival

Location: North and South Willing Street, Milton
Saturday April 25 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday, April 26 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Rivermarket

Offers fresh produce from local farmers.
Opening late April, Early May. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 7a.m. to 1 p.m. FMI: (850) 626-6246 for Season Pass or daily rates.

First Friday Fest

Every first Friday of each month (except December) Historic Downtown Milton's businesses extend their hours to host music, artist and an evening of shop, dine and strolling. Cafes and Bistros are open late for fabulous dining options. Free Artist setup and Free to the public. FMI: Main Street Milton (850) 626-6246

Main Street Nights; Summer Concerts in the Park

Free outdoor concerts in downtown Milton along the Riverwalk just south of the Veteran's Memorial. Held the third Saturday of each month (May 16 until October 17) from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.



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Growing Jobs in Santa Rosa County

Retaining and growing jobs is the driving force for maintaining a quality of life in any community. Your interest may be growing your own business, having opportunities for your son or daughter to stay in our area, or having the peace of mind your employer remains successful to provide a periodic paycheck to you and your family. Whatever your motive, job creation remains a critical component to ensure our area is viewed as a desirable place to live, work, and play. Without new jobs, people leave our area, schools show a decline, existing businesses falter, and layoffs in the public and private sector start to occur.

Our county commission has taken the position to encourage economic development for the well being of our citizens. Integral to this effort and one of the few advantages we have in recruiting new and expanding business to our community is having product. Well positioned, free of zoning constraints, and having the infrastructure to rapidly meet the need are reasons to have industrial sites on hand and available. Responding quickly to a business considering our county as a place to expand is absolutely critical to competing with Alabama, Georgia, or other parts of Florida to attract targeted industries. You cannot be quick to market without the product to market.

As TEAM Santa Rosa has consistently relayed to the commission and the public, there are certain assets a community is required to have in place to be able to be successful. Along with an existing skilled workforce, potential for a sustainable workforce, business friendly climate, incentives and quality of life is product. The commission voted to purchase 90 acres of industrially zoned property with road, water, and sanitary sewer to the site. This property will allow us to market to those types of companies that dictate they have direct access to the interstate. While the 267 acres at the Whiting Aviation Park and the Santa Rosa Industrial Park has the 230 acres not yet developed with utilities and approximately 130 acres that are shovel ready, these 130 acres are not contiguous nor are they as close to the interstate as desired by most large logistic companies. This purchase now provides us with a diversity of product.

Why the county? Why not the private sector and let the market work its course? The answer is we are not playing in a fair game. The game is tilted by neighboring states writing checks and delivering on incentives that we simply don't have and could not afford if we did. To bring the field back to a more level surface, our county can produce sites that may be close to the interstate, near a rail line, served by adequate utilities, or already permitted for construction. With the investment in these sites the county can then leverage offering land in exchange for jobs----jobs that are higher wages, associated with clean industry, and serve our area's economic best interests. The private sector cannot be selective. They must sell to the best offer that comes along regardless of the job component.

It is quite easy to take the position we cannot afford to spend dollars, even those set aside and accumulated for years for this purpose, during these tough economic times. I would argue, we cannot afford not to.



Left: Welcome to Bay Area Food Bank, the Santa Rosa County Industrial Park's newest business. A ribbon cutting for the 15,000-square-foot distribution center was held on February 27.

2009 Gulf Coast Agribusiness Conference

As part of a regional effort to improve agribusiness profitability and sustainability through education and advocacy, TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council, along with the University of Florida-IFAS, Santa Rosa County and Santa Rosa County Cooperative Extension Services, presented the 2009 Agribusiness Conference on February 26 at the Jay Community Center. The conference, "Growing Small Farms," featured presentations on the Panhandle Fresh Marketing Association, Florida small farms, bees for pollination, farm records and tax management, basic hydroponic production, oil and ethanol production, biodiesel production and a panel discussion to explore successful small farms.

Following the presentations, guests had the opportunity to visit the University of Florida, West Florida Research and Education Center for two seminars: Growing Crops for Oil and Ethanol Production / On Farm Biodiesel Production (pictured below) and Basic Hydroponic Production / Greenhouse Production.



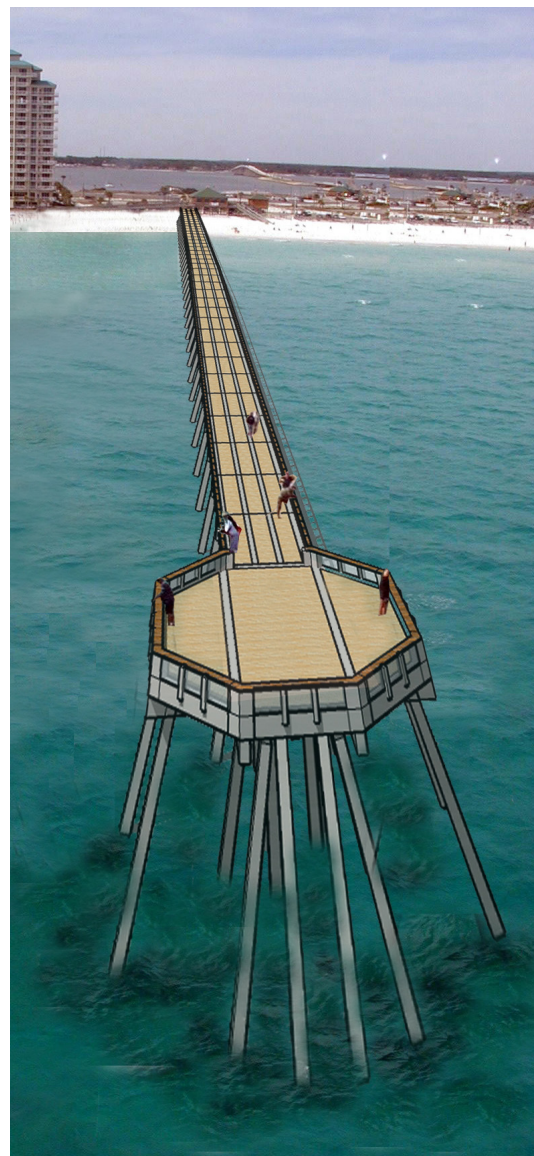
Navarre Beach Pier to be Rebuilt

On March 12, the Santa Rosa County Commission voted to accept Ed Waters and Son Contracting's bid for the construction of the new Navarre Beach Fishing Pier. Construction could begin as early as April 30 with a possible completion date as early as May 2010.

In 2004 and 2005, Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis damaged the current pier beyond repair. The new pier is budgeted at \$8.43 million, which includes the demolition and removal of the old fishing pier. Ninety percent of the project budget will be paid for utilizing FEMA federal aid for disaster recovery funds for improved projects with a state share of 7.5 percent and the county funding 2.5 percent or \$210,626.

The new fishing pier will be constructed approximately 200 feet to the left of the previous pier and will feature:

- Pier length- 1,500 feet
- Steel Strength- grade 100, which has a corrosion lifespan of 50-60 years
- Concrete piles- 146-two foot square concrete piles totaling over 9,500 feet in length combined
- An octagonal end design with a surface area of approximately 3,800 square feet.
- Deck- over 370 breakaway wood panels, which would detach during heavy wave action and help preserve integrity of the structure, reducing possible storm repair costs
- Deck height- 30 feet above the water
- Surface- over 32,000 square feet of accessible surface Railing- more than 3,000 feet of handrail with no obstructions located above the railing which would interfere with fishing
- Attendant building with stair and ramp access to pier
- Low wattage lights to protect sea turtle nesting
- Up to 15 handicap accessible railing locations
- Two potable water spigots



There will be impacts to beach-goers during construction with construction traffic and parking areas roped off for construction equipment. Residents and tourists may use the facilities at the county's Navarre Beach Park located adjacent to the pier area. The free park reopened in October and offers over 300 parking spaces, 11 pavilions, public restrooms, grills and boardwalks to the beach.

Out of the Ashes

Some may recall the City of Milton met with property owners and others interested in the city's Community Redevelopment Area over a year ago to discuss a proposed new development code for the CRA which also happens to encompass the Historic District. The new code set elective new standards in the CRA commonly called a TND code for Traditional Neighborhood Development. The code places an emphasis on the appearance of proposed buildings. Those buildings must be in keeping with what has been found in that part of the community historically. In exchange the developer can build at a higher density than one could previously, building heights can be increased and uses are broadened dramatically. All of these things mean a better bottom line for the owner and a project the community will embrace. As a result of this work one can honestly say that the owners can build back better, faster, and with far more options than before. Milton got it right.

On another note the city is working with the county to expand the City's CRA to include areas north along Broad Street to Carpenters Park and south from Canal East to the city limits. The result would allow the city to leverage available funding options that will result in Milton truly being that special place on the Blackwater River. Visit the Riverwalk, envision the future. It's exciting.



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Clean Community Celebrates 25 Years with Many Events

Starting with plant sales at the Green-Up Nursery and wrapping up with the popular Rivers Clean-Up, the Clean Community System has a packed calendar of events for the entire spring. The non-profit, environmental education agency is celebrating their 25th year of existence the way they always have, not with celebration parties, but with a full plate of events.

March

Green-Up Santa Rosa, the nursery that supports the programs of the system and provides plants for public plantings, will be opening with their annual spring sale. A wide variety of trees, shrubs and flowers, both perennials and annuals, are available to the public throughout the spring and summer.

April

April 1 – City of Milton Street, Sanitation and Park Workers Appreciation Day – the longest running program of the system celebrates the workers in the city who help to Keep Milton Beautiful

April 18 – The Great American Clean-Up – also one of the longest running programs of the system. This annual “spring clean-up” has become a nationwide event sponsored by Keep America Beautiful. Groups and individuals will meet at sites throughout the county at 8 a.m. and lasting until noon. Meeting sites in Santa Rosa are:

Milton - Milton High School
Pace - Pace Assembly of God
Navarre - NatureWalk Park
Avalon - Christian Life Church
Munson - Blackwater Baptist Church
Floridale - Bliss Way
Bagdad - Bagdad Museum (Church Street)

May

May 9 – Annual Mother’s Day Art & Craft Show – Artists and crafters are spread throughout the Green-Up Nursery for the Annual Mother’s Day Show. Hanging Baskets and flowers will be available and there will be food and drink.

May 16 – Paint Your Heart Out – This long time program of the Clean Community System turns its sights on the West Florida Railroad Museum, in cooperation with the Santa Rosa Historical Society. Groups and individuals should call the Clean Community System to register for the event. If the project is not finished, it will be completed on subsequent Saturdays.

June

June 1 - Green-Up Annual Crepe Myrtle Sale – One of the most popular trees of the south because of its hardiness and beautiful summer flowers, Green-Up’s Annual sale features the Crepe in all sizes and colors.

Annual Rivers Clean-Up – This will be the 23rd year for the Annual Rivers Clean-Up, headed up by retired Navy Captain Walt Reese since the beginning. With the cooperation of local canoe vendors, the event runs through the months of June, July and August.

Peter Prince Airport Quick Facts

The existing 97 hangers have a 94 percent occupancy rate with only one corporate hanger remaining unleased.

The county is developing a design-build bid package to construct additional hangers through a \$512,000 joint participation agreement with FDOT which will provide 80 percent of the total project costs. Construction is slated to begin early this summer.

5th Annual Santa Rosa County Animal Service Adopt-a-thon

Santa Rosa County Animal Services with sponsors Mediacom, Soft Rock 94.1 and WXBW 102.7 will hold its 5th annual adopt-a-thon on Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the shelter located at 4451 Pine Forest Road in Milton. For this special event, the adoption fee is \$15 for cats and \$20 for dogs with a spay/neuter voucher provided at no cost for any unaltered animal. Attendees who wish to adopt a new pet and currently have pets at home should bring proof of rabies vaccination for each animal. Pets on leashes are welcome to attend.

Free food, local rescue organizations, vendors, children’s activities, contests and drawings will be offered during the adopt-a-thon including:

- Easter egg hunt
- Santa Rosa County Sheriffs Office K-9 demonstrations
- Fire Safety prevention with Smoky Bear
- Horse demonstration and photos provided by the Santa Rosa County Horse Assistance Council

For more information call Santa Rosa County Animal Services at (850) 983-4680.